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ABSTRACT

Governing board members and chief administrators are increasingly faced with outside demands for better accountability, higher productivity, and experimental innovations at the same time that students stress the need for more relevant courses and more daily contact with professors. A few of the most important trends which have potential for strengthening and further centralizing planning and coordination for the traditional colleges and universities suggest: (1) State general revenue support for higher education is leveling off; (2) higher education will no longer be a growth industry nor even a steady state industry unless an entirely new constituency can be attracted to its institutions; (3) the Federal Government has adopted policy reducing the number and volume of dollars for categorical programs that aid institutions and is instead giving financial aid to the students so that they may attend institutions of their choice; (4) there is a growing tendency for those who want training in a great variety of skills, and in career education, to attend proprietary and industrial schools rather than colleges and universities; and (5) there is more collective bargaining by faculty. (Author/MJM)

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Statewide Planning and Local Autonomy

Lyman A. Glenny

Given the experience of the past decade, the world of education beyond the high school will undergo radical transformation. No major segment of postsecondary education will be left out of the planning as in the past.

Governing board members and chief administrators are increasingly faced with outside demands for better accountability, higher productivity, and experimental innovations at the same time that students stress need for more relevant courses and more daily contact with professors. These changes in colleges and universities are demanded at the very time that financial resources available to them are particularly restricted, forcing institutions to reexamine programs, to reallocate existing resources, and to reassess their relationships to the society. We seem to be responding to these several pressures without comprehending some of the great significant trends which foretell, in part, where we are heading in the world of postsecondary education.

I have selected a few of the most important of these trends which have potential for strengthening and further centralizing planning and coordination for the traditional colleges and universities. Institutional autonomy, always a relative matter, will continue to be reduced by these events.

Perhaps the trend of which we are most aware is the leveling off of state general revenue support for higher education. It appears that the proportion of the state budget going to higher education will be no greater in the future than now — perhaps smaller.

For example, in 1962 higher education institutions in California received 16 percent of the state gen-

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HE 005626

eral revenue. By 1970 they received 20 percent. In 1971, only one year later however, the proportion was down to 17 percent and it looks as if, when the data arrive, the 1972 proportion will be lower still.[1] Significantly, the old proportion of the revenue is still available. California shows a surplus of around a billion dollars above the governor's budget. That surplus apparently is earmarked for other social priorities but could be used for higher education if public officials would authorize it.

Otner states are in a somewhat similar situation. The Center for Research and Development in Higher Education at Berkeley found that twice as many states in 1971 had a reduced proportion of the state budget for higher education as states with an increased proportion.

The event which forces less funding growth for higher education is the establishment of a new set of social priorities in which higher education drops from the top of the "top ten" to a much lower position.[2] Health care, the common schools, and the environment and recreation, among others, are surfacing as high-priority concerns in the legislatures of nearly every state. The states are also beginning to aid directly or indirectly the private colleges. However, state scholarship, grant, and loan programs, as well as direct grants to private institutions, will all be funded from that same single total amount for higher education in the state budget. Our evidence indicates that the proportion of the state budget for higher education — no matter who or what is included — remains about the same.

Incidentally, those private institutions which receive any substantial part of their funds from the state will be increasingly subjected to the master planning, program control and management constraints of the state to the same extent as the public institutions. Indeed, as the president of the Sloan Foundation has indicated, by definition, if they accept public funds they become public - institutions.

The dollar amount provided by state government for higher education is almost invariably based on student enrollments. All states, for budgeting purposes, use formulas, ratios, or productivity factors relating to the number of students in each institution. That basic fact portends new funding issues as the next trend I mention takes hold.

The second trend indicates that higher education will no longer be a growth industry nor even a steady state industry — as some optimists now dub it — unless an entirely new constituency can be attracted to its institutions. Here are some facts about the national state of affairs:

1. The actual number of five-year-olds dropped 15 percent between 1960 and 1970. These are the college youth of 1978 and beyond.[3]

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2. The actual number of births dropped 9 percent between 1971 and 1972. These are the potential freshmen of 1989 and 1990.[4]

3. The nation's birthrate is at its lowest point in history, at a rate for zero population growth and it has not yet stablized at that rate.[5]

4. The proportion of all males 18 to 19 years of age who are in college has dropped to the level it was in 1962 — down to 37.6 percent from a high in 1969 of 44 percent.[6]

5. The proportion of males 20 to 21 years of age in college has dropped from a high of 44.7 percent in 1969 to 36 percent in 1972, almost 9 percentage points less.[7]

6. Women in the 18 to 19 age group leveled off at about 34 percent in 1969, and those in the 20 to 21 age group seemed to have leveled at 25 percent during the past two years.[8]

7. In the fall of 1972 the four-year colleges and universities lost about one-and-one-half percent in first-time (freshmen) enrollment, while the public community colleges increased less than 1 percent.[9]

8. Nearly 85 percent of the 12 percent increase of all first-time students entering institutions of higher education between 1970 and 1971 entered the community colleges.[10]

9. Some colleges and universities are now advertising their programs and services in newspapers and on TV and radio in order to attract students.[11]

These facts, individually and collectively, indicate that institutional competition for students will increase to intense levels bordering on the rapacious. Some institutions, both public and private will lose in this struggle — and some very likely will go out of business.

A third trend may not be fresh news to most of you but it has serious consequences for the distribution of students among institutions. The federal government has adopted policy reducing the number and volume of dollars for categorical programs which aid institutions (including those with research functions), and is instead giving financial aid to the students so that they may attend institutions of their choice.[12] The federal student aid programs provide students with the right to receive financial aid even if they attend a proprietary trade or technical school. This radical departure from recent federal policy has great import for the further redistribution of students away from college-type institutions. Frank Newman has recommended the same policy for support of graduate education, i.e., support the student, not the institution.[13]

The federal opening of a free market for the student has its counterpart in potential policy in the

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states. Several governors, including those in Ohio and Georgia, have made formal proposals that students pay back to the state the full costs of their college education. Private college pressure to increase to competitive levels the tuitions in public colleges and universities, as recommended in California, also leads to an open market in which institutions compete for students. Certainly, as this open-market trend gains momentum, as it is now doing, the student will examine closely his personal costs in tuition and in foregone income, and will select that school which he deems most economical and most appropriate for his needs.

The trend least recognized in the regular academic community is the growing tendency for those who want training in a great variety of skills, and in career education, to attend proprietary and industrial schools rather than colleges and universities. IBM, General Electric, and other corporations now offer bachelor's degrees. The Arthur D. Little firm is seeking approval of a master's degree in the state of Massachusetts. The National Center for Educational Statistics has gathered data (yet to be reported publicly)[14] which indicate enrollments in profit-making institutions are now well over two million persons. This rapidly growing sector of postsecondary education parallels the increases in enrollment in adult and continuing education. There are now about 12 or 13 million persons in some adult education program.[15] While research data are scarce, the slowdown in enrollments in the regular colleges and universities appears to correlate with the amount of emphasis which an institution places on the liberal arts. The shift is toward occupational and career training rather than liberal education. The institutions responding most readily to this shift in goals continue to increase their enrollments.

Moreover, many of those persons turning away from the regular two- to four-or-more-year stint in a college have many new noninstitutional means of acquiring either technical training or liberal arts work. The external degree, the university without walls, the videotape cassette and closed circuit TV will have major influences on how both adults and college-age youth obtain their education in the future. Certainly, many students now opting for the short technical program for job entry will later wish to take courses in the liberal arts and in general education. But to do so, they probably will not need — and may not desire — to attend a traditional college or university.

One of the great opportunities for the future is to meet the educational needs of the millions of young adults who are now engaged in pure skill training for job entry. The new technologies for delivery of education are being quickly grasped by young adults as well as older persons. Some planners work on the assumption that by 1985 a major share of all collegiate instruction will

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take place off the campus through external means.[16]

Increasingly, too, we will consider the college degree less and less as certification for particular competencies. External agencies may do much more certifying than in the past and, in addition to degrees or even without them, the postsecondary institutions may be certifying particular skills or knowledge packages. The degree itself may come to mean little as a person acquires a series of lesser certificates which indicate his specific capability to conduct certain kinds of tasks. This condition will be reenforced by the prediction of the U.S. Department of Labor that only 20 percent of all jobs in the 1970s will require college training.[17] In the face of this oft-repeated forecast, we find about 50 percent of high school graduates going on to college — some with education as a goal, but many seeking a career opportunity.

One final trend relates to collective bargaining by faculty. It may turn out to be at least as important for higher education institutions as any so far mentioned. It can have substantial influence on the autonomy of the institution and on the rational development of postsecondary education.

Today, one can hardly keep track of the changing power relationships among faculty, students, administrators, and board members. Yet the future is likely to make the shares of power and the roles of each group much clearer, primarily as a result of unionism and collective bargaining. Contracts will not only reassure a threatened faculty about loss of tenure, but will cover working conditions, teaching loads, advising, independent study, and even the curriculum and hours taught. The trade unions have shown time and again that once bargaining starts, regardless of rules and laws to the contrary, anything and everything is negotiable.[18] The new power relationships will be contractual. For public institutions, the negotiations of these contracts will be between the unions and state-level officials rather than with institutional administrators or boards. Powers eventually left for the president and governing board could be almost purely ministerial — to carry out contract provisions. The overall trends resulting from unionism will be conserving ones. Faculty will protect themselves, more rigidities will confront both administrators and faculty members and due process provisions of many kinds will be carefully followed. What will be greatly impaired will be change, flexibility, and adaptability, which all of the trends previously mentioned will demand of a collegiate institution successfully responding to the imperative demands of the 1970s and 1980s.

In the face of these trends, several of which are radical departures from the recent past, how do the institutions of higher education and their faculties respond? For the most part

faculties, and to a lesser extent presidents and boards, still believe we are in a *temporary* setback and that with a change in political parties at the state or national level things will return to the normal of the 1960s. We still find the phenomena – particularly in the South – of the junior college trying to become a four-year college, and – in all regions – the four-year college a university, and the university a comprehensive graduate-research center. Almost all institutions try to obtain as many students as possible, since size also represents a measure of "success." Almost invariably, the public institutions' projections of enrollment, if aggregated for the state, show future enrollments greater than the total number of college-age youth. I have recently revealed some of the trends mentioned above to college and university leaders in several states. The response by state college and emerging-university presidents often has been one of outright antagonism – not because they believe the trends to be invalidly interpreted but because, if public policymakers accept them as reality, the institutional goal to become an advanced graduate center is almost certain to be thwarted.

The trends and conditions I have mentioned, as well as many others, point directly to increasing reliance on greater centralization of planning, with the major chore resting squarely at the state level. The challenge of planning and coordination in the states is to encompass all postsecondary educational forms, delivery systems, and types of programs while promoting innovation, flexibility, adaptability and opportunity. During the 1960s and into the 1970s, 47 states strengthened or developed state higher education agencies with responsibilities for at least some aspects of the planning process. They did so in the 1960s to meet the needs of rapidly expanding numbers of students. They do so now to insure orderly development, adequate diversification, and effective use of limited resources in postsecondary education. Of these agencies, 27 are coordinating boards and 20 are unified governing boards. The trend is to strengthen such agencies and increase the scope of their responsibilities. Some 32 states during this last year strengthened or modified the agencies to meet changing conditions. Without question, the states are committed to effective planning and coordination as a prerequisite for funding postsecondary educational needs. Restricted funding, declining enrollments, funding through students, and collective bargaining all support this conclusion.

State imperatives causing centralization of planning is being reenforced by the federal HEA 1972. The Education Amendments underline the recognized need for broadening the scope of state planning to cover the range of postsecondary education – public, private, and proprietary – and for the involvement of the various types of postsecondary education institutions in the planning process. We must recognize that the need for comprehen-

sive planning is at least as great if the federal government funds students as it would be if it funded a whole range of specific programs. Federal policy assumes that increased reliance on the market, i.e., letting the student make the choice about which program he will attend, will reduce the necessity for federal planning. If that is the case, it will at the same time increase the need for state planning. The goal of equal opportunity can be realized in the next decade only through a diverse system of institutions — public, private, and proprietary.

It is no coincidence that the federal demand for more comprehensive state planning for postsecondary education comes at the same time that federal funds are authorized for use to finance students in proprietary institutions. Nor is it a coincidence that the Education Commission of the States, which grew out of the National Governors' Conference, has authorized a new task force: *Coordination, Governance, and Structure of Postsecondary Education.* The charge to the Task Force is to study and to provide guidelines and models for more effective planning and coordination of all institutions, schools, institutes, and agencies engaged in education or training at the postsecondary level.

The cumulative impact of the trends previously cited, the new state planning commissions, and the committee of the Education Commission of the States cannot be fully anticipated. Given the experience of the past decade, with the increasingly sophisticated staffs of the state planning and coordinating boards in 27 states, one can expect that the world of education beyond the high school will undergo radical transformation. We can estimate that no major institutionalized segment of postsecondary education will be left out of the planning as in the past (e.g., private colleges and proprietary schools), and new delivery systems and technologies with potential for extending education to the home, the office, and other places as easily as in an educational setting will increasingly become a matter of major attention by planners and coordinators. Unfortunately from the institutional perspective, freedom and autonomy will be further eroded. Fortunately for students of all ages, parochial interests of single segments of education will be giving way to a more cosmic view of not only which institutions should be legitimized as educational performers, but of the very character of the educational content and the processes necessary for both education and training in the challenging era to which we are now committed.

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